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AUTHOR Kleinhammer-Tramill, P. Jeannie; And Others
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ABSTRACT

This study examined the implementation of the Kansas Project Partnership objectives to improve teacher education by interviewing 53 representatives of 8 higher education institutions in Kansas (Pittsburg State University, Wichita State University, Emporia State University, Kansas State University, University of Kansas, the Associated Colleges of Central Kansas, Washburn University, and Fort Hays State University) that were implementing subgrant programs. The goals of the project were to develop new programs and coursework options, restructure preservice teacher education, implement policies that would enable workers to take advantage of higher education opportunities, and establish an evaluation and a dissemination system. The primary objective of most subgrants has been that of better preparing teachers to serve students with diverse needs. Data were classified into themes, issues, and barriers for each institution. Themes of the subgrant programs include: preparation of general educational personnel to teach students with diverse learning needs; development or enhancement of partnerships with school districts or individual schools; and preparation of related services personnel to work more effectively across disciplines in the school setting. Case studies of the experiences in implementing the programs from each higher education institution are presented. Findings show that most of the project partnership subgrants have reflected grassroots efforts by individual faculty, program areas, and/or departments. The project has stimulated ongoing conversations among faculty members of Kansas Institutions of Higher Education. Policy directions indicate the importance of inclusive education and the empowerment of local communities and schools through the Quality Performance Accreditation system. Recommendations are made for the final years of the project, and include: continued evaluation activities; project partnership staff should assist projects in sharing information with each other and attempt to facilitate conversations in institutions which have encountered barriers; partnership subgroup participants should continue to explore definitions and practices related to inclusive education; and subgrant participants should be assisted in focusing their vision on the systemic impact their efforts can have during the final years of the project. (JPB)

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A Formative Evaluation of Kansas Project Partnership

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P. Jeannie Kleinhammer-Tramill, Ph.D.
University of Kansas

Phyllis Marie Kelly, Ph.D.
Kansas State Board of Education

Karen Symms Gallagher, Ph.D.
University of Kansas

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Phyllis M. Kelly, Ed.D.
Kansas State Board of Education

P. Jeannie Kleinhammer-Tramill, Ph.D.
University of Kansas

Karen Symms Gallagher, Ph.D.
University of Kansas

Kansas Project Partnership was initiated by the Special Education Outcomes Team of the Kansas State Board of Education (KSBE) in 1992 under the auspices of a grant from the United States Department of Education (USDOE), Office of Special Education Programs - Division of Personnel Preparation. The Kansas Project Partnership grant was written and is directed by Dr. Phyllis Kelly, Goals 2000 Team Leader for the KSBE, and Coordinator of the Special Education Outcomes Team at the time that Kansas Project Partnership was funded and through the first year and a half of its operation. According to the Kansas Project Partnership grant proposal (KSBE, 1992), the purpose of Kansas Project Partnership is "to implement a major systems change effort in Kansas personnel preparation programs" (p.1). The implementation objectives include:

1. To implement programs with institutions of higher education to develop creative new programs and coursework options.

2. To restructure preservice training programs.

3. To implement a relevant programmatic and research program.

4. To identify and implement personnel policies that facilitate workers to take advantage of higher education opportunities.

5. To establish an evaluation system.

6. To implement a dissemination system (pp. 1-2).

The primary strategy for implementation of Kansas Project Partnership objectives has been to award competitive subgrants of $20,000 each or less to institutions of higher education. Since the first subgrant competition was announced in 1992, the priorities for subgrants have included:

* Establishing collaborative partnerships between educational entities [institutions of higher education and local education agencies];
* Redefining the relationship between departments or units responsible for preparing personnel in the areas of general education, special education, and related services;
* Creating collaborative new programs and coursework options; and,
* Developing faculty/staff mentoring programs.

The Project Director saw the federal Partnership initiative as providing a means to stimulate change in Kansas' teacher education programs. She felt that teacher education programs in Kansas needed to be better aligned with Quality Performance Accreditation, Kansas' educational reform initiative. She describes her vision for the overall outcome of Kansas Project Partnership as follows:

> I do have a vision of what higher education should be like as a result of this project. In the grant it was stated in terms of dissolving departmental lines. Whether that's actually happened or not is not that critical to the success or failure [of participating IHE's]....[The goal is to dissolve departmental lines] philosophically....rather than structurally. The important thing is philosophically creating this cross-communication, this cross fertilization and looking at what's happening in the schools, what do we need to do to train our teachers to more effectively work with students with diversity as a total rather than diversity as a special education need or a cultural need or a language need. And, I believe the way to do that is to look at our teacher education system and restructure that philosophically, if not structurally.

The subgrants to institutions of higher education awarded through Kansas Project Partnership have generally addressed the purpose of the project. Kansas Project Partnership has undertaken replication/dissemination activities simultaneously with its primary activities. The replication/dissemination activities have consisted of providing small subgrants to states surrounding Kansas for the purpose of stimulating collaboration between state education agencies and institutions of higher education and for initiating changes in personnel preparation of general and special educators which parallel those underway in Kansas.

Evaluation Methods

The evaluation of the project, described here, was carried out by contract with the University Affiliated Program at the University of Kansas. The University Affiliated Program has neither submitted nor received subgrant funding through Kansas Project Partnership, in part because its mission does not include preservice preparation of educators. The charge to the evaluator was to both evaluate and facilitate the project or "to help move things along and find out if anything's really happening" in the words of the project director. In order to carry out this charge, the project evaluator used naturalistic inquiry methodologies as described by Skrtic (1985). The evaluator discussed procedures for naturalistic inquiry in detail with the Project Director prior to development of the contract so as to obtain general agreement regarding the methodology, scope of the evaluation, time frames for conducting the evaluation, types of reports to be developed, and strategies for providing both evaluation and facilitation of project activities.

Data collection: Data collection for the inquiry included interviews of administrative and teaching faculty at the eight Kansas colleges and universities which have participated in subgrant activities under Kansas Project Partnership. Interviews were conducted over a one year period (October, 1995 - October, 1996). All interviewees were informed of the purpose of the interviews and how data would be used for development of case studies describing Kansas Project Partnership efforts. Interviewees were also informed that member checks would be conducted and case studies would be modified by participant input before any case studies were provided to the Kansas State Board of Education. Interviewees were also asked for permission to quote and permission to tape record the interview. (Permission to tape record was not granted by three faculty members within one institution and one faculty member within another institution). An average of 1.3 interviews were conducted with each participant. Interviews lasted an average of 50 minutes each. Audiotapes and notes from all interviews were transcribed by the evaluator and staff and filed by institution.

Data were also collected by observation/participation in 11 meetings related to Kansas Project Partnership activities. Topics for these meetings included planning new subgrant activities, reports on progress within subgrants, Professional Development School meetings involving problem-solving related to preparation of preservice teachers to employ a variety of strategies for management of classroom behaviors, and analyses of teacher education curricula to determine where competencies related to inclusive education should be delivered.

The evaluator reviewed a number of documents including the Kansas Project Partnership grant proposal to USDOE, subgrant proposals, evaluation reports, and reports by subgrant directors to the Kansas Project Partnership Management

Team. The evaluator also reviewed approximately 10 hours of videotaped interviews conducted under a separate contract for dissemination.

Subjects: Subjects included 53 persons representing the eight participating institutions of higher education. Participants included deans of education (n=6); chairs of teacher education programs (n=2); an acting dean (n=1); department chairs within colleges or schools of education (n=9); special education and general education faculty members (n=14); and K-12 educators (n=5).

First round interviewees included directors of the subgrant projects at each institution. Second round interviewees were identified based on nominations by subgrant project directors, by the director of Kansas Project Partnership, and by the investigator's familiarity with individual faculty in Kansas teacher education programs.

Data analyses: All interview, observation, and document data were classified into themes, issues, and barriers for each institution. Subsequent rounds of questions for interviews were based on these categories of findings and needs for clarification of responses. Interviews/observations were conducted until redundancy was reached and interview findings were triangulated.

Case studies were developed for each participating institution. Each case study was subjected to member checks to identify additional progress since development of the case study, to assure accuracy of the case study information, to identify conflicting perspectives, and to provide a basis for refinement of the case studies. An audit of the findings, including reviews of interview tapes or notes and case studies selected by the independent auditor, is in progress.

Limits of the study: Findings are limited to faculty and administrator perceptions of subgrant progress and impacts. Impacts on preservice teachers have not been examined. Likewise, course syllabi have not been examined to identify evidence of new/modified course content. However, several of these steps are currently underway.

The formative evaluation report: This report represents a draft summary of findings across institutions and was developed to meet the reporting demands of the Project Director and Management Team. The report provides a summary of findings related to change efforts underway through Kansas Project Partnership subgrant funding at participating institutions of higher education in Kansas. This formative evaluation report is organized around common themes and issues related to the change processes which participating institutions of higher education have

undertaken and around problems which the subgrant recipient institutions have encountered. The scope of the report includes the 25 subgrant projects at 8 institutions funded between Jan. 1993 and Jan. 1995. Data from each project have also been used to develop institutional case studies which are currently being subjected to member check processes by participants. The case studies serve as a collation and interpretation of interview data about each project. To the extent possible, the text of the case studies consists of narrative descriptions provided by participants. In this sense, the case studies provide a vehicle for participants at each institution to tell their own stories of what has happened through the Kansas Project Partnership system change effort. The case studies can, thus, best be viewed as snapshots of eight different teacher education programs which are all attempting to carry out change processes related to a common but broad goal of improvement in teacher education related to Quality Performance Accreditation. The case studies are evaluative only in a formative sense; that is, their primary purpose and utility is to inform participants of their own collective vision of what they are doing and have accomplished. The value of this effort lies in its potential to unify or at least clarify these collective visions so that each institution can move forward in its agenda. The case studies are not intended or suitable for the purpose of determining that one institution or project participant is making more progress than another because the progress of each teacher education program is tied to the context of that program -- the leadership, the faculty, historical events which have shaped common and divergent beliefs and values as well as the institution's approach to Kansas Project Partnership changes. On the other hand, the sharing of case studies has the potential for encouraging adoption or adaptation of new strategies for change and accommodation of new visions for teacher education in Kansas.

Themes of Kansas Project Partnership Subgrants

Theme 1: Preparation of general education personnel to teach students with diverse learning needs: The primary theme of 20 of the 25 subgrant projects funded over the first three years of Kansas Project Partnership is that of how to better prepare general education teachers to meet the educational needs of children and youth with diverse learning needs. The strategies which have been employed to address this theme can be classified into three general groupings. One such strategy involves a sequence of steps including: (1) developing partnerships with the field; (2) using partnerships with the field to identify or validate a set of competencies for educating students with diverse learning needs; (3) delivering competencies in general education classes; and (4) expanding delivery of competencies to other program areas such as administrator training.

The second, and more commonly used, strategy involves processes which are less easily defined and more dependent on development or alteration of relationships between individuals and departments. The processes involved in this second strategy typically include efforts to stimulate collaboration between key general education and special education faculty through frequent and regularly scheduled meetings around curricular issues and/or through faculty involvement in co-teaching, team teaching, or teaching new courses. Several divergent strategies have occurred as well, including developing new courses or revising existing courses to deliver or field test content.

Theme 2: The second general theme of most of the projects has been that of development or enhancement of partnerships with school districts or individual schools. Virtually every project has included goals, objectives, or activities designed to promote relationships with the field. The types and purposes of relationships with the field have included: (1) A series of formal meetings or focus group discussions are held for the purpose of soliciting input from general education and/or special education teachers. These meetings are conducted for the purpose of identifying or validating competencies related to inclusion of students with diverse needs or for soliciting more general comments from teachers in the field regarding how teacher education programs should change to prepare new teachers to work in inclusive classrooms. One Project Partnership participant describes the rationale for this approach as "...meeting our need in teacher education to capture and incorporate new knowledge and skills invented in daily practice as a way to deal with new problems and challenges." (2) Ongoing relationships with one or more schools are developed or enhanced. These relationships consist of formal Professional Development School relationships or less formal but ongoing relationships between several teacher education faculty and one or more schools. Interview data suggests that these relationships focus on improving field experiences for preservice teachers, development or enhancement of the capability of schools to serve students with diverse learning needs, inservice or faculty development for teacher educators, and identification of practices in the field which will be used to influence teacher education curricula. (A final purpose of Professional Development Schools as identified by the Holmes Group (1990; 1995) and by several deans of education is to develop collaborative research agendas between practitioners and teacher education faculty. The evaluator did not solicit or find interview evidence that collaborative research agenda are being established.) (3) Relationships with schools are developed through mentoring programs, inservice, and/or technical assistance to general education teachers, special education teachers, or related services personnel.

Theme 3: A third general theme involved preparation of related services personnel to work more effectively across disciplines in school settings. The same general strategies used to accomplish goals related to preparation of general education personnel have been employed to accomplish goals and objectives for preparation of related services personnel. All but one of the subgrants funded under the related services competition involved development of partnerships with the field to provide professional development, to identify content, to improve course formats (e.g., practicum) and, in several cases, to deliver training. All of the related services competition subgrants involved some efforts to stimulate interprofessional training. The one related services subgrant which did not focus primarily on relationships with the field was, by design, more similar to the **Theme 1** grants in that it reflected an effort to bring about systemic change across a school of education through interprofessional training partnerships with departments responsible for health, social welfare, and child development as well as those responsible for professional preparation of educators.

Changes which are occurring in conjunction with Kansas Project Partnership

At four of the participating institutions of higher education (Kansas State University (KSU), Pittsburg State University (PSU), Emporia State University (ESU), and Wichita State University (WSU)), Kansas Project Partnership efforts have consisted of sustained three year efforts to accomplish a consistent goal or set of goals, beginning with the initial subgrant funding cycle and continuing through the present. Notably, at each of these four institutions, the Project Partnership subgrant has been a focal point for efforts to increase collaboration between general and special education faculty, to improve teacher education curricular content related to serving students with diverse learning needs, and to strengthen relationships with the field. At each of these institutions, the projects have focused on enhancing the preparation of elementary teachers, secondary teachers, and school administrators to include students with diverse needs. The focus on preparation of school administrators was an extension of efforts undertaken during the first two years at KSU and was addressed through related services subgrants at PSU, ESU, and WSU.

Pittsburg State University: Interview data from PSU indicates significant progress at the elementary level. Several individuals described how they address issues of diversity in their assigned courses and in field experiences. One faculty member describes the impact on prospective teachers, "Initially, when we start [the field experience that accompanies her course], some will say, 'oh, give me a different child, give me different children', and I say, 'we can work with these children.' In

the classroom, you can't say 'take them back.'" And they always end up changing their attitudes at the end." Data from PSU also indicates that while two of the three courses (reading in the content areas, exceptional children, and techniques for teaching in specific content areas) taken by all secondary education majors provide a great deal of information related to diversity and inclusion, efforts to impact secondary content methods (techniques) courses have posed difficulties due to several issues to be described in a later section.

PSU's effort to improve training for administrators has focused on providing professional development to area administrators in the concept of developmentally appropriate practice for young children. According to the project director, administrator training does not typically include content beyond legal requirements related to special education or early childhood education. In anticipation of adoption of the new teacher licensure proposal and in response to the trend to define early childhood education as spanning an age range from birth through eight, the project focuses on helping administrators to understand quality programming for young children - the content of which overlaps significantly with validated practice in supporting education for students with disabilities. The project has provided local administrators with both professional development and technical assistance in developing plans for early childhood programs to local administrators. According to project staff, information gleaned from this work with practicing administrators will be used in subsequent project periods as a basis for faculty development and improvement of the preservice administrator training program.

Wichita State University: As with PSU, interview data from WSU likewise indicates significant progress in terms of improving the teacher education curriculum to include content related to serving students with diverse learning needs. At this institution, special education faculty now teach several of the core teacher education courses related to instructional and behavioral management and assessment in Block 2 of the teacher program. At WSU, elementary and secondary educators complete the first two of four blocks of teacher education content as a cohort group. Thus, the cross-teaching strategy employed by special education faculty at WSU has impacted prospective teachers at both elementary and secondary levels.

An additional component of WSU's effort across the three years of the project involves development of a mentoring system for new special education teachers. According to the faculty, new teachers face challenges due to professional isolation and to building and district specific practices. The mentor relationship helps new

teachers to learn these role demands, thus increasing the probability of their retention in professional positions. Anecdotal data provided by the faculty suggest that the mentoring relationships are well established, often ongoing beyond the formal time parameters supported by the project, and perceived as useful by both mentors and new teachers.

WSU has had two related services Partnership Projects. A project for training school psychologists to work in interdisciplinary building teams to support inclusive education has spanned two funding periods. This project has involved development of ongoing relationships with four schools through the building team involvement. The project director has prioritized involving families as team members and provides descriptions of the initial reluctance of some schools and enthusiasm among others to participate in these collaborative activities. The project director's description of these barriers as well as those posed by traditional, segregated special education service delivery systems are described in the issues and problems section to follow. A third project has involved surveys and focus groups of building administrators who are considered to be particularly effective in supervising special education programs to identify key skills and competency areas which will, in turn, form the basis of a redesigned preservice school administration program. The project director reports that focus groups, interviews, and survey data have been completed and will be used as the basis for the newly designed curriculum being initiated at this time (fall semester of 1995).

Emporia State University: The initial activity at ESU involved developing a cadre of local teachers and administrators, all of whom are experienced in implementing inclusive education, to serve as informational resources to teacher education faculty. Early in the project, members of this resource group were asked to review and modify or validate a list of teacher competencies related to inclusive education based on their experiences. (The resulting product, the list of inclusion competencies, have been disseminated to and used to stimulate discussions among participants in other Kansas Partnership projects). Both interview data and observations of faculty planning meetings related to the Partnership subgrant indicate that faculty at ESU have examined their curricula against a set of competencies related to inclusion to determine where those competencies can best be delivered in both the elementary education and secondary education curricula. The same strategy of infusing inclusion-related competencies has been used to improve the administrator training program. Comments from interviews indicate that competencies are being addressed in assigned courses. Area teachers who are successfully including students with diverse learning needs have been involved in faculty meetings associated with each of the ESU projects on an on-going basis. In

several meetings observed by the evaluator, these teachers provided presentations designed to build positive attitudes and to provide teacher education faculty with information about strategies for successful inclusion.

Kansas State University: At KSU, significant progress has been made in integrating content related to diversity into core secondary education courses. One faculty member comments, "Toward the latter part of last semester we made the final decision, we're really going to really look at the curriculum and our parts in it. There'd be some individual teaching, there'd be some team teaching, there'd be some co-teaching. We really tried to understand what educational psychology would bring to that [diversity issues], what about general methods, and the exceptional child course". Secondary teacher education content methods courses have not been altered. Efforts to address elementary education curriculum and instruction at KSU have consisted primarily of faculty awareness activities growing out of Professional Development School relationships. One faculty member describes his experiences with inclusion when he states: "And with inclusion, boy, I'm telling you, I'm out there with them. In one class there are four adults, four adult teachers and about 18 kids....Because of those field experiences, they [preservice elementary teachers] have the opportunity to see it all -- one little part would be inclusion". Elementary faculty participate in ongoing bi-weekly discussions between elementary education, secondary education, special education, and through the last funding period, administrator education, but curricular progress has come more easily in the core secondary teacher education courses. As described in the issues and problems section, two interrelated features of KSU's efforts appear to be particularly effective. First, a faculty member who was previously chair of special education was appointed to the role of Coordinator of Teacher Education at the outset of the project, and project efforts were clearly tied to this role. Second, a key activity within the project has been informal bi-weekly meetings of department chairs representing teacher and administrator preparation program areas. These discussions appear to have spawned interest in integrating curricula across and within departments.

A second Kansas Project Partnership thrust at Kansas State University has involved examination of the field experiences including practica for early childhood special educators. The project directors describe the project as an attempt to address the challenges of assuring that early childhood special educators have both in-depth exposure to students with disabilities and exposure to inclusive early childhood education programs. They are nearing completion of a research effort to identify indicators of quality early childhood education practica and field experiences based on the literature as well as a survey of Kansas educators. The product resulting from this effort consists of a data base of research findings.

According to the project directors, their findings indicate that practica in inclusive settings do, indeed, provide sufficient exposure for preservice early childhood special educators. The data base produced through the project is available on disk and should be a resource to early childhood special education personnel preparation programs in Kansas.

Associated Colleges of Central Kansas: ACCK participated in Kansas Project Partnership activities the first and third funding years. Special education faculty at ACCK face the unique challenge of attempting to integrate content related to serving students with diversity into teacher education curricula across six teacher education programs within the consortium's member colleges. However, the barriers posed by distance between the colleges, different campus identities, and different teacher education faculty and curricula are spanned to some extent by a twenty five year history of collaboration. All of the teacher education faculty meet monthly to discuss areas of mutual concern including the consortial special education program. According to participating faculty, through Project Partnership activities, content has been integrated into reading and/or language arts methods courses and field experiences on three of the six campuses through team teaching between general education and special education faculty.

University of Kansas: KU has spawned three short term (one project period) and two long term (at least one funding period with renewals currently pending) projects. Two of the short term projects focused on collaboration with teachers in inclusive settings to identify competencies. One of these was carried out in the context of an existing Professional Development School relationship. The other involved a series of interviews and meetings with area teachers to support their efforts and to elicit their input for needed changes in elementary education and special education teacher preparation curricula. A third project involved an inservice effort as part of a larger federal project to train general and special education teachers to provide reciprocal support and feedback.

Of the long-term (multiple funding period) projects, one involved a collaborative effort between several faculty to pilot content related to strategies for teaching students with disabilities in inclusive settings in the survey of exceptional children course required of all teacher education students. Faculty from two departments have co-taught the course for several semesters now and have collected data to show the impacts on students. In addition, while not directly related to Project Partnership efforts, several faculty members have developed ongoing collaborative relationships which cross department lines (special education and curriculum and instruction) and which result in integration of inclusion related content in language arts methods courses within the core teacher education program. In addition,

these faculty members have surveyed students at several points in their teacher education program (before student teaching, after student teaching, and before and after the fifth year internship) to elicit students' self-ratings of the degree to which they are prepared to teach children with diverse learning needs. Data from the survey is currently being collated and may prove useful in addressing needs, strategies, and curricular implications for the broader teacher preparation program. As discussed in the problems and issues section to follow, the group of faculty who engage in team teaching and collaborative planning is small due, in part, to somewhat specialized traditional role designations within the departments responsible for special education and curriculum and instruction. However, these faculty have engaged in a sustained effort, and their progress is undoubtedly quite important within the context of a complex university and professional school.

The final project at KU, initiated during the last funding period, is a School of Education - wide attempt to develop collaboratives among faculty across departments within the School of Education as well as social welfare, health related professions, and child development. Participation by faculty has been moderate; however, observation data from a series of Administrative Council meetings and other faculty meetings held in conjunction with the project suggest that faculty awareness has grown through the project and that pilot efforts are underway. Participants in a September, 1995 project meeting engaged in a surprisingly frank level of discourse about their definitions of and experiences with inclusion of students with disabilities. One participant suggested that all professional preparation program areas within the School of Education were faced with common issues and challenges related to training educators to collaborate to serve a more diverse population of students and suggested that a core curricular sequence related to collaboration and organized so as to cut across departments and program areas should be considered. To the extent that this level of discourse continues, it would appear that KU may move toward implementation of systemic efforts to improve the curriculum for preparing educators and professionals from other disciplines that serve children. An additional impetus for collaboration may come from a Board of Regents and, in turn, University mandate to reorganize the School of Education so as to eliminate two departments. The Dean's vision and initial Administrative Council support suggest that reorganization may offer the opportunity to stimulate even programmatic collaboration consistent with the goals of Kansas Project Partnership.

Washburn University: Washburn University participated in the second year of Kansas Project Partnership subgrant funding. Like subgrant efforts at other institutions, Washburn used Partnership funds to hold a series of focus group discussions with special educators involved in inclusive education for the purpose of

identifying curricular implications for the elementary and secondary teacher education program. The groups met over the course of a year, and according to faculty members and a consultant who worked to facilitate the focus groups, the competency areas identified were primarily dispositional rather than skill-based -- a finding which to some extent parallels the findings of this evaluation in terms of how education faculties effectively collaborate within and across departments to improve curricula. Washburn, like other Kansas Project Partnership participants, also has active formal relationships with area schools through its designation as a Comer School teacher preparation site. The principles of Comer Schools, as described by one faculty member are highly consistent with Kansas Project Partnership in terms of espousing the value of diversity. Washburn's progress appeared to be somewhat hindered by personnel changes in special education faculty who also played key roles in the Partnership efforts. One teacher education faculty member states of progress to date, "We have all the right partnerships in place as far as the schools and the teachers, now all we have to do is use them." Washburn's special education faculty appears to have once again stabilized from a personnel perspective; however, it has not participated in further Project Partnership efforts.

Fort Hays State University: Fort Hays State University participated in the first round of Kansas Project Partnership efforts but not in subsequent rounds. As with several other projects, the Partnership efforts consisted of conducting meetings with educators who were viewed as particularly effective in implementing inclusive education in order to identify curricular implications for the teacher education program. Due to the broad and sparsely populated area which FHSU considers its geographical constituency, the meetings were held by ITV. A faculty member who participated in the meetings indicated that the group of educators were not able to describe their practices effectively, particularly in terms of the relationship between practice and theory. While the meetings were not viewed by participants as useful in terms of potential curriculum modifications, they reflect an attempt to build a basis for collaboration with local educators.

Fort Hays State has undergone several personnel changes and reorganization since the Project Partnership effort. Interestingly, with these changes, the departments of special education and curriculum and instruction have been merged into one unit. As discussed in the section on issues and problems related to departmental relationships, this structural change may well facilitate examination and improvement of the teacher education curriculum.

Issues and Problems Encountered in Kansas Project Partnership Subgrant Implementation

Several issues directly related to the stated goals of the project have arisen in most of the projects which have addressed these goals. These issues include (1) selection of strategies for implementing Project Partnership objectives and activities, (2) administrative location of project efforts, administrative support, and relationship between university departments charged with primary responsibility for preparing teachers; (3) relationships between faculty who have primary responsibility for teacher preparation; (4) relationships with local education agencies; and (5) relationships between KPP change efforts and other innovations underway in the institutions.

Selection of strategies for implementing Project Partnership objectives and activities: As identified in the section which describes themes, the primary theme among the majority of subgrants has been that of better preparing educators to serve students with diverse learning needs. One of two strategies have been used across the projects which address this theme. The two strategies involve either identification of competencies to be infused into courses or a less defined, somewhat holistic approach involving continuous collaboration among faculty. The competency identification and infusion process is deeply ingrained in teacher education. Teacher education accountability and accreditation systems have traditionally been based largely on curriculum reviews consisting of inspection of course syllabi to determine that agreed upon competencies are displayed. Moreover, Kansas' licensure redesign proposal proceeds from the assumption that the knowledge and skills and, to some extent, dispositions which constitute effective teaching can be codified. (Notably, however, the licensure redesign proposal shifts accreditation emphasis from displays of competencies within course syllabi to teacher demonstration of those competencies in the classroom; that is, to training results or outcomes.) Thus, the emergence of an alternative approach to change employed by several of the projects is somewhat surprising. One dean of education described his rationale for selection of the holistic approach as follows:

> I believe that teacher education has always suffered from fractionalization. That what we've always done is added a class to take care of this and a section to take care of that and a competency to take care of that and that sort of thing as if somehow or another when you add everything together you get the whole, and I am completely convinced that that's baloney. If you don't start out with some big concept of what you want this to be, then adding all these little pieces on doesn't make it, and we usually satisfy somebody outside better if we do the other thing. If you're going to go up for NCATE approval, it helps....But, it concerns me that its too easy for people to become invested in a part of an operation and suddenly realize that you have nobody who's invested in the whole thing. And I think that I've felt that way

> about our teacher preparation program for many years. You didn't find anybody who said that they trained teachers. They all said that they are science people or they're reading people or they're math people or they're social studies, and nobody said that what they do is train teachers but that's the bigee -- that's the big picture.

The shift to holistic conceptions of teacher education and curricular innovation may reflect a shift toward postmodernism as applied to educational epistemology by Skrtic (1991). Notably, a critical feature of the holistic approach to education appears to be a focus on the ontology of inventing new practice to solve unpredictable problems. This focus emerges in contrast to modern scientific approaches which feature codified solutions to problems. The notion that one can codify inclusion-relevant competencies which can be mixed as ingredients to produce a teacher who is better at solving problems related to diversity would appear to reflect a modernist approach. The notion that schools of education must incorporate new practices as they are invented in real classrooms characterizes a holistic, postmodern approach. Importantly, virtually all of the projects, regardless of approach, have included steps whereby real teachers who do the day-to-day work of schooling either validate or help to identify useful practices in teacher education.

The shifts in conceptions of teacher education and approaches to change described above also reflect current policy initiatives. *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* and the reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act (*Improving America's Schools Act of 1994*) both provide accountability frameworks which acknowledge the inherent unpredictability and difficulty, but necessity, of educating all students. Whereas previous federal education legislation has been highly prescriptive in defining educational services and procedures, based on the notion that effective practices can be codified, current legislative initiatives acknowledge that only local solutions can address local problems and that communities of educators and families must have the flexibility to invent educational services which match their needs. On the other hand, alignment of teacher development systems with state and local reform efforts will undoubtably necessitate employment of similar accountability systems for teacher education and professional development.

Which strategy for curricular innovation associated with Kansas Project Partnership efforts is more likely to lead to continued progress? Kansas Project Partnership has just completed its mid-year. Answers to the questions of which approach will lead to long term change are not yet available but should certainly be explored for the benefit of Kansas' institutions of higher education as well as those around the nation which are engaged in similar efforts.

Administrative location of project efforts/relationships between departments: One of the areas of emphasis which could be addressed under Kansas Project Partnership was that of examining relationships between departments. While only two projects have addressed this issue through specific objectives and activities, interview data suggest that departmental relationships, configuration, and physical location are viewed by faculty as having a major impact on communication and collaboration. At one institution, the special education faculty are administratively housed in the same department (Curriculum and Instruction) as are faculty who teach most of the core teacher education courses. As stated by one faculty member,

> One of the things that we've really worked on is being able to integrate our faculty and the regular ed faculty. And we feel very fortunate that we're in a department where we don't have to fight across department lines to be able to interact with the faculty, and I feel that that's something we have that a lot of other university programs don't have because we're part of the same faculty.

Another special education faculty member at the same institution describes the advantages of being physically housed together when he states, "Physically we're interspersed. We see them [general education faculty] every day." On two campuses, departments of special education are physically separated ("across the street" or "down the hill" or "on the Kansas City campus") from departments of curriculum and instruction. A faculty member observes, "I'd be willing to bet you that there's some faculty in my department that have never been to the special ed department. I don't know how we're going to do something about that." In each of these instances, disparities also exist in the quality of facilities and technologies available to support faculty work.

Typically, the Kansas Project Partnership subgrants have been located in departments of special education, departments of curriculum and instruction, or in the related services department which the grant addresses. In the case of the University of Kansas, one Partnership grant is administered by the Office of the Dean. At Kansas State University, the Partnership grant was originally administered by the Director of Teacher Education and is now administered by the Chair of Special Education. In several cases of projects which are housed in departments, the location of the project and the project administrator's academic interests appear, not surprisingly, to determine the content and scope of the project. For example, in two cases of subgrants managed by special education faculty, improved preparation of special educators was the primary thrust of project efforts. In some cases of projects which have been refunded over several years, the scope of

initial project activities was expanded to impact both special education and general education, apparently as faculty responsible for the project gained more information as to what other institutions were doing through Project Partnership. In cases where the project has been located in departments of curriculum and instruction, faculty from those departments have at times been involved to the relative exclusion of special education faculty and vice versa.

The administrative location of Partnership projects may have an impact over the developmental course of a project. In one example, the location of a project worked well through the period of faculty awareness activities and even initial curricular improvement activities. However, while faculty within one department have made course modifications, the chances that these will be sustained would be greatly enhanced by planned, systematic collaboration with faculty from other departments. The argument that the administrative location of the Partnership projects may have a developmental impact is further supported by the fact that on many of the campuses faculty from different departments have engaged in something like "parallel play" during the first two years of Project Partnership. That is, special education faculty have struggled with their own curricular issues related to formulating an effective response to new standards under the licensure redesign proposal while general education faculty have struggled with similar issues simultaneously and separately. In many cases, faculty from general education and special education likewise struggle independently with curricular issues related to inclusion. Thus, in some cases, general education faculty have made substantial progress in addressing issues of diversity in their curricula in spite of having only sporadic contacts with special education faculty. While Project Partnership efforts appear to have been somewhat catalytic in prompting faculty across departments and program areas to begin to examine their curricula proactively in anticipation of licensure redesign, Partnership subgrants do not appear to have been used directly for this purpose except in the case of several related services projects and in the case of one component of a project. Moreover, Partnership efforts toward preparation of general education teachers for inclusion seem to be viewed as a separate demand from that of curriculum improvement in anticipation of licensure redesign. As discussed in the section on relationships between faculty, this sort of parallel play in the form of intradepartmental discussions could be interpreted as either a stumbling block to progress or a developmental milestone. This evaluator's perspective based on observations of some of the interdepartmental and intradepartmental meetings is that within-department discussions may be important -- particularly in institutions where faculty have functioned with relative autonomy and/or in highly differentiated roles. Two examples of such a developmental course are provided by institutions where a few faculty from within a department participate in project efforts to the

exclusion of others in the department. Over the past year in one of these examples, broader discussions around the issue of licensure redesign have emerged. These discussions have occurred independently of Project Partnership efforts, however, the recent emergence of a conversation which spans all the faculty within the department may well signify readiness for a more unified Project Partnership effort.

The administrative location of a Partnership subgrant also appears to be of critical importance in cases where the need for curricular revision impacts faculty from other schools or colleges within the university. In cases where Partnership project efforts have targeted secondary education, the arts and sciences affiliation of faculty who teach secondary content methods courses is frequently a barrier. In these cases, Partnership subgrants which are located in one department are less likely to be able to influence faculty from an entirely separate administrative unit than are those subgrants which are operated from a central administrative office (e.g., the dean's office or the office of the director of teacher education) within the school or college of education. Partnership subgrants which are designed to impact preparation of related services personnel would appear likely to follow a similar developmental course. That is, while important early efforts have occurred to improve related services preparation programs in school psychology, early childhood education/special education, administrator preparation, etc., the Project Partnership goal of stimulating closer collaboration to serve students with diverse learning needs, the trends toward interprofessional involvement in professional practice in each of these disciplines, and the trends toward interprofessional training in these disciplines would almost certainly necessitate location of these projects within administrative units which can effectively pull together the full array of disciplines and faculty available on a campus.

In summary, most of the Project Partnership subgrants to date have reflected grassroots efforts by individual faculty, program areas, and/or departments. Most of these efforts have progressed from isolated faculty activities toward expanded departmental or interdepartmental efforts. The grassroots level activities have been important in stimulating discourse and initiating steps toward assessment of curricula at a given level. The discourse at each level (individual faculty, program areas, and/or departments) provides an important starting point. (By analogy, we typically learn to talk to neighbors and family members before we join conversations at the community level.) However, the more centralized administrative location of a few existing projects and several proposed projects suggests that the projects themselves are progressing to encompass broader curricular issues and are becoming more systemic change efforts than can be effectively accomplished from within one department. (Notably, the Kansas Project

Partnership Management Team redesigned the request for subgrant proposals for Fall, 1995, to prompt broader, or at least coordinated institutional efforts.)

Relationships between faculty who have primary responsibility for teacher preparation: Interview data and observation records would suggest that the most profound impact of Kansas Project Partnership efforts has been that of stimulating many ongoing conversations, some of them about curricular issues, between faculty members at Kansas Institutions of Higher Education. The words of project participants are most descriptive of this impact. For example, one faculty member describes his participation:

> Clearly, I don't have the total picture [regarding Kansas Project Partnership] because I'm in secondary education other than what I've read and have participated in discussions about. My involvement has been probably best described in two different settings. One is that approximately a year ago [faculty from] elementary education, secondary education, and special education, educational psychology...we all got our heads together and said, "you know, we really need to talk more, we need to share ideas more because we're so interdependent on each other and frankly we need each other's ideas." So we started -- and it worked quite well...We would go to lunch about every other week. We would talk about issues of substance, we would talk about issues of what's going on in the world, and how are things at your house, and sharing. We've all been here quite a number of years, but it helped us all to get to know each other better, and we felt very comfortable. Nobody felt like they had to produce an agenda; we just went and talked and shared a lot of excellent ideas. So that was very valuable.... It's really helped us look at each other and what we're trying to do in a more realistic sense. I think a lot of that came from, certainly feelings that [another faculty member]...had in terms of some things we're developing or not developing with elementary ed, some feelings that I had related to graduate programming, undergraduate programming, where we were overlapping....[The faculty member] and I had been feeling some desires to keep comparing some notes about how we can best encourage science education folks and people who are driving the reading curriculum to get together....It became obvious that...we really need to be bringing in special education folks because those are teacher preparation folks also. And, also, because of the collaboration that goes on in terms of elementary's Block A and, certainly our secondary Block 1, we realized that on a frequent basis if not a regular basis we really needed to talk to someone from educational psychology. So it was emerging on a number of issues and we began to look at our roles and our opportunities a little different. But it was a big step, and

> it was - it was excellent from the very beginning. ...We all knew each other, we had all attended meetings [together]....And everybody just came [to the meetings] feeling very comfortable, and if somebody had something on their mind that they needed to talk about, there weren't any issues that were really kind of dumb issues or anything like that. We treated everything as important because it was.

A problem area or barrier which stems from the interpersonal aspects of the Partnership efforts has been that of changes in key personnel during the early stages of Partnership participation. Five institutions have experienced problems maintaining continuity of project efforts when key faculty have been reassigned to other roles or left the institution. Two of these institutions did not continue to pursue Project Partnership activities; a third did so after a year's hiatus. A dean speaks to the importance of expanding the scope of faculty conversations, involvement, and vision beyond that of time limited or individual faculty "projects" when he states:

> [It's important]...that you're able to form formal and informal relationships with all the players so that you're able to establish -- well, like this partnership program...where people are buying into it. And it leads them [faculty] away from some sort of formalization of it. I think whenever you start to establish these partnership relationships you have to kind of triangulate ... or however many points you need to bring together so that people see it as part of a big picture and it isn't just like one project that does this or an individual who's associated with it or that sort of thing, but its the norm that we are going to try to make things work....

In four institutions, one faculty member, typically a special educator, appears to play a key role in facilitating project activities. In some cases the project director plays this role, in other cases he or she works closely with the individual who is viewed as a facilitator. Interview data from these institutions include multiple references to the person who formally or informally assumes this facilitative role. The facilitator is typically viewed as a trusted friend by multiple faculty who turn to him/her for information and assistance. In several cases, these persons are viewed as playing a role in bringing people together. In other cases they are viewed as sources of individual support by multiple faculty, all of whom describe the individual as a friend.

Relationships with Local Education Agencies: As noted earlier under Theme 2, all of the Project Partnership subgrant efforts have involved some form of

interaction with Local Education Agencies. These have ranged from a time-limited series of meetings with K-12 educators to gain information about or validate approaches to preparing preservice educators to work in inclusive settings to development of long term Professional Development School relationships or use of Professional Development School relationships as a vehicle for prompting curricular change. Several issues have emerged from faculty discussions of these relationships.

Whether partnerships with the field are time-limited or long-term efforts, faculty vary in their perceptions of K-12 educators as true "partners" in the teacher education process. Some faculty members such as the one cited under Theme 2 clearly feel that they learn from interaction with the field. One faculty member who works frequently in Professional Development Schools suggested, in fact, that informational workshops were not so important to him because he "sees it all first hand and learns beside my students". For other faculty, theoretical distancing from the field seems to pose a barrier to receiving information from K-12 teachers.

These opposing faculty postures with regard to relationships with teachers in the field are mirrored to some extent by relationships between teacher education programs and local education agencies. In some cases, the Professional Development School partnership appears to reflect a dynamic, reciprocal relationship between the teacher education program and participating schools. In others, Professional Development Schools are viewed as little more than commonly used sites in which some students participate for field experiences or schools which need intervention. Issues such as the presence of faculty on-site in the schools on a regular basis and clinical instructor roles which involve simultaneous participation in the school and involvement as more than an adjunct faculty member in the teacher education program provide evidence of reciprocal learning by faculty and school personnel as identified in interview data and observation records.

The relationship between school-based activities and Kansas Project Partnership is also an issue. While the goals of Kansas Project Partnership clearly encompass development or enhancement of relationships with local education agencies, the goals also prompt changes or improvements in teacher education programs. Indeed, in many schools of education across the U.S., Professional Development School activities have become a primary vehicle for preparing teachers to work in inclusive settings (Paul, Rosseli, & Evans, 1995; Pugasch, 1992). Within several Kansas Project Partnership subgrant projects, the relationship of school-based activities to improvement of the teacher education curriculum is clear. In other Partnership projects, the focus on school-based activities has not yet been tied to improvement of teacher education curriculum. Undoubtedly, these processes, like those within and

between departments, are developmental. Moreover, these issues are not fully resolved among the exemplary programs described in the literature. However, in looking toward the issue of how Kansas Project Partnership effects systemic change in Kansas, discussions of the "big picture" in terms of the relationship between school-based activities and programmatic activities in teacher education are essential.

Definitions/perceptions of inclusive education: As viewed by the Project Director, the overarching goal of Kansas Project Partnership is to align teacher education systems in Kansas with Quality Performance Accreditation. Quality Performance Accreditation as well as federal education legislation is inclusive in its intent to improve the educational performance of *all* students including those with risks due to poverty, racial diversity, limited English proficiency, and disabilities. While neither the Kansas State Board of Education nor Kansas Project Partnership espouse "full inclusion" as the single appropriate model for serving students with disabilities, participants in Kansas Project Partnership subgrant activities clearly see Project Partnership as a way to prepare teachers to provide inclusive education. Due to this perception, definitions and existing practices which are labeled "inclusion" are major issues in the Kansas Project Partnership effort. Faculty involved in Kansas Project Partnership efforts express diverse opinions about inclusion as it is being implemented in Kansas. Some faculty express concern that incidences of violence in the schools are related to increased inclusion of students with behavior disorders. Other faculty express concern that schools in their area provide highly segregated services for students with moderate to severe disabilities so that their students do not have opportunities for field placements, student teaching, or practica in inclusive settings. Several faculty define inclusion as placing all students with disabilities in a regular education classroom with one teacher, a paraprofessional, and no additional services. Among these faculty, strategies for helping teachers learn to work with paraprofessionals are viewed as important to the teacher education curriculum. One faculty member indicated that she sees inclusion as a general concept which applies to all aspects of diversity including gender, ethnicity, race, religion, urban/rural differences, disability, language, and socioeconomic level. Yet another special education faculty member expresses concern that certain categorical groups of special educators will "mess up inclusion". One education dean argues that instruction which is effective for diverse populations of students can be used to improve instruction for all students. He states:

> ...as we work with the schools, and as the faculty members reach a clear awareness level of the prevalence and the demands that inclusion has made on school teachers -- that it is leading to some real fundamental discussions

> about the preparation of teachers, not the least of which is that it may be the time when people are starting to understand what it means to talk about appreciating diversity and using diversity as a force for educational improvement -- for the improvement of learning....We need to see how we can use techniques that have been developed in working with children with special challenges in the context of instruction and vice versa. And we can also use the presence, the strength of experience and character, and that kind of thing that many children who have to work harder can bring to the other children in the class. So I see diversity, the understanding of diversity and its advantage to education, as coming to the fore in a way that it never has.

The agenda for strengthening education for all students through Goals 2000 and related state initiatives such as Quality Performance Accreditation in Kansas is important as is Kansas Project Partnership's goal for preparing teachers to work with students with diverse learning needs. Kansas Project Partnership was funded under the auspices of the Office of Special Education Programs - Division of Personnel Preparation of the U.S. Department of Education. Thus, funding for Kansas Project Partnership comes from appropriations under the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA). Current discussions of the reauthorization of IDEA clearly prioritize preparation of both general and special educators to serve students with disabilities in inclusive settings (Hehir, 1994). Likewise, the reauthorized ESEA (*Improving America's Schools Act*) prioritizes inclusive Title I services. A report on implementation of Title I (formerly Chapter I) of the ESEA (USDOE, 1994) reports that traditional "pull-out" approaches to remedial education result in curriculum fragmentation and that growing evidence suggests that the resources of Chapter I should be infused into general education classes where they can benefit all students.

These policy directions clearly suggest that the discussions of inclusion occurring as part of the Kansas Project Partnership effort are important and likely warrant clarification if Kansas is to respond proactively in developing its teacher education capacities to prepare teachers for services which are consistent with these initiatives and which match the needs of Kansas students.

Relationship of Kansas Project Partnership efforts to other change initiatives and summary: Kansas Project Partnership efforts parallel profound social and policy shifts which are impacting our state and the nation. At the national level, Goals 2000 reflects a trend toward policy and fiscal devolution which increases local responsibility and which will likely affect social and educational service systems for the coming decades. Within Kansas, Quality Performance

Accreditation accomplishes the same shift toward empowerment of local communities and schools and toward local accountability for results in terms of student performance. Within the Quality Performance Accreditation system, schools must participate in assessing their own effectiveness and show progress toward better educational results through School Improvement Plans. Teacher education programs are, likewise, prompted to move toward accountability for continuous improvement by the proposed new system for teacher licensure. Thus, one impact of Kansas Project Partnership may be to assist teacher education programs to begin discussions which will facilitate the shift from accountability based on the curriculum to accountability based on results in terms of the performance of new teachers as they enter the field.

One dean of education has pointed out that Kansas institutions of higher education are simultaneously faced with changes which impact their core capacity during an era of fiscal constraint. Several public and private institutions face budget shortfalls accompanied by hiring freezes, salary freezes, and reduced general operating budgets. Changes in demographic trends which affect the number of students entering college and, thus, credit hour production potential, changes in tuition structures, loss of indirect cost recovery as fewer federal grants are available, and the possibility of reduced support from the Kansas legislature all suggest that higher education in Kansas faces many challenges over the next few years. Superimposed on these challenges, teacher education programs are being asked to respond to change initiatives ranging from licensure redesign to Kansas Project Partnership. At least one teacher education program must respond within a year to a Regents' recommendation to reorganize by dropping two departments and several others have reorganized within the past five years. This dean indicates, however, that these very challenges may also be opportunities. She states, "The future is bleak only if you're committed to preserving the past, but I believe we can emerge stronger and be more effective if we try to respond to these challenges by reexamining our roles carefully and looking at what we need to do differently to prepare better teachers for the future."

Teacher education leadership has also changed. Within the Board of Regents universities, only one person has served as dean of education for more than five years. (The senior dean of education within the Regents system, is entering his sixth year as dean). The selection of new leadership for education schools and colleges would suggest that change and change agents are valued. These changes in leadership appear to provide the opportunities for teacher education units to engage in re-examination of curricula, instruction, and structures for delivery of teacher education. For example, during her first year as Dean, the Dean of the School of Education at the University of Kansas contracted a curriculum audit of

the core undergraduate teacher education curriculum which, she states,"has received relatively little scrutiny since KU's five year teacher education program was initiated." As described in the KU case study, the curriculum audit together with the Regents' mandate to restructure provide the basis for Kansas Project Partnership activities under her direction. Under the leadership of a second year dean at Wichita State University and his immediate predecessor, Wichita State University's College of Education undertook a complete curriculum revision and reorganization. Moreover, the College of Education at Wichita State has experienced a faculty turnover of approximately 40% due primarily to retirements and elective departures. Similarly profound changes have occurred in schools and colleges of education in each of the Regents universities.

Each of these changes adds challenges to the task of preparing teachers with the new skills, competencies, and attitudes which are essential if Kansas' children and youth are to succeed in meeting the high standards of performance required for entry into a highly skilled workforce. Each of these changes likewise provides the occasion for teacher educators to examine their practices and to develop more responsive systems for both preparing teachers and engaging in supportive partnerships with the field. In evaluating the overall impact of Kansas Project Partnership, one member of the Project Partnership management team has stated, "The major impact of this project can only be judged in terms of its relationship to other changes underway".

Recommendations: (Additional and more specific recommendations are included in each institutional case study.) As the project enters its fourth year, evaluation activities should continue to track the landmark initiatives underway through Kansas Project Partnership. While the literature includes reports of similar changes occurring in teacher education programs across the nation, Kansas' effort through Project Partnership is unique because of the state education agency's role in the effort, because of the coordinated effort across multiple institutions of higher education, and because the amount of money which supports these efforts at each institution is remarkably small compared to typical levels of grant support for such activities. Kansas Project Partnership staff should assist projects in sharing information with each other and attempt to facilitate conversations in institutions which have encountered barriers. Based on the issues surrounding "inclusion" which have emerged across virtually all of the projects, the Project Management Team as well as Partnership subgrant participants should continue to explore definitions and practices related to inclusive education and facilitate development of a common and realistic vision of what inclusive education is and isn't and how it relates to school restructuring through Quality Performance Accreditation in Kansas. Finally, it would seem most important to assist subgrant participants in

focusing their vision on the systemic impact their efforts can have during the final years of the project and to celebrate their accomplishments thus far.

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